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LIBERATION OF CUBA

The end-of-the-year rally in Miami honoring the ransomed Cuban invaders for their valor was chock full of emotion. Men wept, and shouted "war, war!" billions of exiled Cubans were stirred to the point where thought vectors had been snatched from the jaws of the President's well-known policy to this country and the expression that the U.S. will tolerate any regime in Cuba so long as it is freely-chosen, is no Marxist-Leninist (whatever that means these days), and is not so friendly to the United States.

The head of hope and forgiveness was held out even to those who truly serve Castro, provided they repent. But, beyond "bearing witness" to the cause of freedom, Mr. Kennedy's words and presence raised more questions than they answered.

How is Castro to be deposed, and what is the role in that mission of the brigade so warmly saluted? By what means can the President deliver on his promise that the flag of revolt, of which he is now the custodian, "will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana." Is this brigade to be kept intact as a fighting force, groomed as an elite in a post-Castro regime? The President, like all the rest of us, has "the strongest wish that Cuba shall one day be free again." But wishes alone will not dislodge a firmly-entrenched government.

"This brigade," the President said, "will deserve to march at the head of the free column" when Cuba is liberated; it is "the point of the spear, the arrow's head." Can we be sure that these courageous men best represent the aspirations of most pro-democratic Cubans? To take an example, one of the six brigade spokesmen who called on the President in Palm Beach and who stood at his side during the ceremonies in Miami is Manuel Artime.

Artime is the man selected by CIA to command the invasion forces in Guatemala. His military competence has not been questioned, but his identification as a U. S. instrument, some would say, has compromised him with many of the Castroites.

The President told the brigade

and the message was beamed throughout Latin America — that all men who fight for freedom are our brothers and shall be united with our country and others are free.

a statement which goes far beyond any limited objective of getting "offensive" Soviet weapons out of Cuba and might even be compared by some to Mr. Khrushchev's statement a few days earlier approving "a just liberation war."

What does this rhetoric mean? On his return from his meeting with Mr. Khrushchev in Vienna, Mr. Kennedy told the American people that he and Khrushchev have wholly different views of right and wrong, of what is an internal affair and what is aggression. Are their views so totally different? Perhaps they are.

But Mr. Kennedy has not yet clearly spelled out to the American public, the Russians, or skeptical ex-colonials around the world, exactly where the difference lies. Fortunately, however, the soaring platitudes that echo universal ambitions are in both cases subordinate to the realistic knowledge that little wars of liberation could set off nuclear wars that will liberate no one. — The New Republic

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